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quick facts on...

# Saving Water at Home

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## The South Florida Water Management District

is a regional governmental agency that manages the water resources in the southern part of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.

**Our Mission** is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving flood control, water supply, water quality and natural systems.

*Some utilities within the SFWMD offer rebates and incentives to their customers to replace inefficient fixtures within their homes. The District's Cooperative Funding Program has helped to fund residential water conservation efforts throughout the region for many years. Please check with your local water provider to see if toilet, faucet or showerhead replacement programs are available.*

## Water Savings: Indoors

Water efficiency is the smart use of our water resources through watersaving technologies and behaviors. Using water more efficiently helps maintain supplies at safe levels, protecting human health and the environment. Replacing old plumbing fixtures and water-using appliances with new, high-efficiency models can achieve significant water savings and reduce household utility costs.

Installing a High Efficiency Toilet (HET) can reduce the amount of water used for flushing by 20 to 60 percent.

Upgrading to high-efficiency showerheads and faucets can also save thousands of gallons of water each year.

High-efficiency clothes washers monitor clothes volume, water levels and temperature, and utilize repeated high-pressure spraying to clean clothes instead of filling the tub with water.

Modern dishwashers use several wash cycle options and sensors that can automatically adjust the water volume based on the soil level of the dishes.



**Table 1** shows common plumbing fixtures and appliances and their respective water consumption rates. The water consumption shown is before and after industry standards were established by the 1992 Energy Policy Act (effective after 1994) and at two increasing levels of efficiency.

	<b>Toilets (gallons per flush)</b>	<b>Showerheads (gallons per minute)</b>	<b>Faucets (gallons per minute)</b>	<b>Dishwashers<sup>2</sup> (gallons per load)</b>	<b>Clothes Washers<sup>3</sup> (gallons per load)</b>
Pre-1980	7.0 – 5.0	8.0 – 5.0	7.0 – 4.0	20+	50+
1980 – 1994	3.5	2.75	2.75	14 – 10	39
Post-1994 <sup>1</sup>	1.6	2.5	2.2	6.5	27
High Efficiency <sup>1</sup>	1.28	2.0	1.5	5.0	21
Ultra High Efficiency <sup>1</sup>	0.8	1.5	0.5	3.5	14

<sup>1</sup> Based on Federal Efficiency Standards, ENERGY STAR criteria and Consortium for Energy Efficiency Water Factor ratings

<sup>2</sup> Standard size dishwashers

<sup>3</sup> Based on 3.5 cubic-foot. capacity

Retrofitting a house built to pre-1994 standards with high-efficiency toilets, showerheads and faucet aerators could save an average of 81 gallons per day, or almost 2,500 gallons each month. Households that install ultra high-efficiency fixtures, or also replace an inefficient washing machine or dishwasher, can expect to achieve even greater savings.

## Water Savings: Outdoors

Outdoor irrigation accounts for as much as 50 percent of the average South Florida home's total water consumption. Much of this use is in excess of what is required to sustain a healthy residential landscape. Therefore, outdoor irrigation represents an area of great potential for water savings.

When it comes to conserving water in a landscape irrigation system, there are many conservation options, and the right option will depend on many factors. The most important factors in landscape water use efficiency are selection and arrangement of plant material and the design of the irrigation system.

Are the plants grouped according to their irrigation and/or shade requirements? Are the plants in the design adapted to the local environment? After plant material has been selected and arranged, the design of the irrigation system is crucial to ensuring water use efficiency. Do the emitters match the irrigated area? Does the volume of water delivered during each watering event meet or exceed the requirements for the plants? Does the system cover the entire landscape?

A variety of hardware devices can help ensure that a landscape receives all the water it requires and no more. Below is a list of some of the more common devices that can help meet this objective:

- Rain sensors
- Soil moisture sensors
- Efficient rotor and sprinkler heads
- Programmable multi-zone irrigation control systems
- Evapotranspiration or satellite regulated control sensors

## Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures

The Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule (Chapter 40E-24, F.A.C.) is a component of the South Florida Water Management District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program, which was established to encourage more responsible use of water resources throughout South Florida.

In effect since 2010, the Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule limits landscape watering to two days a week throughout the South Florida Water Management District, with a three-day-a-week provision for some counties. Local governments may adopt alternative landscape irrigation ordinances based on local water demands, system limitations or resource availability. Several



*\*Water use for restroom fixtures in gallons per flush for toilets and urinals and gallons per minute for faucets.*

counties, cities and utilities have exercised this option. As a result, always check local ordinances for watering days and times.

Programmable "smart" irrigation controllers can make it easy to comply with local watering schedules.

You may be surprised to see how quickly the gallons add up...and how easy it is to reduce your use! Check out the Water Conservation Calculator on our website at [www.savewaterfl.com](http://www.savewaterfl.com) or email us at [conservation@sfwmd.gov](mailto:conservation@sfwmd.gov) for more information.

## How Much is Enough?

On average, established lawns and landscapes require just one inch of water each week to stay healthy. This amount varies seasonally—plant water needs go up during the peak summer growing season and down during the winter dormant period. The goal is to irrigate only as necessary to supplement rainfall.

You can monitor the amount of water your yard receives naturally by placing a rain gauge outside your home. To see how long it takes your sprinkler system to deliver one inch of water, place empty tuna or cat food cans evenly throughout each zone. After running the sprinklers for a set amount of time, simply measure the depth of water in each can. If the amount of water collected varies greatly from can to can, that may indicate head spacing or equipment issues. Consider hiring a professional to perform a full system evaluation.



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